

SCIURUS EBII PEL, 1851 (MAMMALIA): REQUEST FOR SUPPRESSION UNDER THE PLENARY POWERS. Z.N.(S.) 1846

By A. M. Husson and L. B. Holthuis (*Rijksmuseum van Natuurlijke Historie, Leiden, Netherlands*)

Between 1840 and 1855 H. S. Pel, then an official of the Dutch colonial government of the Gold Coast, sent several shipments of animals from the Gold Coast (present day Ghana) to the Leiden Museum, of which he had been a technician before going to West Africa. Pel's mammals were studied by the director of the Leiden Museum, C. J. Temminck, who published the results of his study in 1853, in a book entitled "Esquisses zoologiques sur la côte de Guinée".

2. In 1851, when on a 10 months' furlough in Holland, Pel published a paper on hunting on the Gold Coast in the then just started journal "Nederlandsch Tijdschrift voor de Jagtkunde" of which H. Schlegel was the editor. In this paper which is entitled "Over de jagt aan de Goudkust volgens eene tienjarige eigene ondervinding" (1851, *Nederl. Tijdscht. Jagtkunde*, 1 : 149-173) and is entirely written in Dutch, Pel used several specific names which at that time had not been published. Most of these names are nomina nuda, but with three Pel gave sufficient indications to make them nomenclaturally available. In two of these cases the discovery of Pel's names has no nomenclatorial consequences, one being a junior synonym of the currently adopted name, in the other case only the author's name has to be changed. These cases are more extensively discussed in a paper on Pel by the junior author of the present paper (Holthuis, 1968, *Zool. Bijdragen*, Leiden, 10 : 1-32; see pp. 25-26, 30-31 for these names).

3. The discovery of the third name, however, creates an undesirable situation, which can be straightened out only under the plenary powers of the Commission. Pel (1851 : 161) mentioned a new squirrel, *Sciurus ebii*, which judging by his account cannot be anything but the West African Groundsquirrel, now known as *Xerus e. erythropus* (E. Geoffroy, 1803). Pel's name, being a junior synonym of Geoffroy's, thus disappears. In 1853 Temminck (*Esquisses zool. côte Guinée* : 129) described a new squirrel, which he also named *Sciurus ebii*, but which is a species entirely different from Pel's species of the same name. Temminck's animal is the Red-headed Forest Squirrel, which at present is known as *Epixerus ebii* (Temminck, 1853). According to a revision of the genus *Epixerus* by H. J. Kuhn (1964, *Bonner zool. Beiträge*, 15 : 149-158) *E. ebii* is the only species of the genus. Kuhn recognized three subspecies of it. The nominate subspecies has not been known under any other name than *ebii*.

4. The existence of the available name *Sciurus ebii* Pel, 1851, invalidates the name *Sciurus ebii* Temminck, 1853. A strict application of the Code here would necessitate the change of name of the only species of *Epixerus* to *E. wilsoni* (Du Chaillu, 1860), while a new name should be given to the subspecies from the Gold Coast. This change seems very undesirable as the name *ebii*

has been used uninterruptedly for the species for more than 100 years. It seems fully justified therefore to suppress altogether the obscure name *Sciurus ebii* Pel, 1851, in order to save *Sciurus ebii* Temminck, 1853. Pel never had the intention to describe a new species and he obviously obtained his species names from Temminck. Temminck at first thought the ground squirrel to be a new species, for which he evidently chose the name *ebii* (in honour of the Dutch governor of the Gold Coast, A. van der Eb), but later (probably between 1851 and 1853) came to the conclusion that the species was not new and then transferred the name *ebii* to another species.

5. The type material of both species is still present in the Leiden Museum and has been enumerated by F. A. Jentink in his 1888 "Catalogue systématique des mammifères (Rongeurs, Insectivores, Cheiroptères, Édentés et Marsupiaux)" published in *Mus. Hist. Nat. Pays-Bas*, 12 : 1-280. As far as known to us a lectotype selection has never been made before. As lectotype for *Sciurus ebii* Pel, 1851, we select: mounted adult male specimen (skull inside) from Butri River, Gold Coast (Ghana), 1842, H. S. Pel; new reg. no. L.M. 19622 (= Jentink's 1888 *Xerus erythropus*, no. g). The museum also possesses three other syntypes which thus become paralectotypes; all three are labelled: Butri River, Gold Coast (Ghana), 1842, H. S. Pel (new reg. no's L.M. 19623-19625). As lectotype for *Sciurus ebii* Temminck, 1853, we select: mounted adult male specimen, skull extracted, from Dabocrom, Gold Coast (Ghana), 1840-1850, H. S. Pel; new reg. no. L.M. 19626 (= Jentink's 1888 *Sciurus ebii*, no. a). Some external and skull measurements of this specimen are given by Kuhn (1964 : 156). The museum also possesses one other syntype, provided with the same data as the lectotype, which thus become the paralectotype (new reg. no. L.M. 19627: mounted female specimen, damaged skull extracted).

6. This opportunity is taken also to ask the Commission to use its plenary powers to validate the emendation to *erythropus* of the name *erythropus* E. Geoffroy (1803, *Catal. Mammif. Mus. National Hist. Nat.*, Paris : 178) as published in the combination *Sciurus erythropus*. The original description of the West African Groundsquirrel gives the specific name as *erythropus*, but most authors have corrected this to *erythropus* and the latter spelling is found in all check-lists and handbooks on African mammals. It seems best to validate the grammatically correct and generally accepted emendation.

7. The concrete proposals that we now submit to the Commission are that they:

(1) make use of their plenary powers to:

(a) suppress both for the purposes of the Law of Homonymy and for those of the Law of Priority the specific name *ebii* Pel (1851, *Nederl. Tijdschr. Jagtkunde*, 1 : 161) as published in the combination *Sciurus ebii*, and all usage of this name before the publication of *Sciurus ebii* Temminck (1853);

(b) validate the emendation to *erythropus* of the specific name *erythropus* E. Geoffroy (1803) as published in the combination *Sciurus erythropus*;

(2) place on the Official List of Specific Names in Zoology the following names:

- (a) *ebii* Temminck, 1853, as published in the combination *Sciurus ebii*;
- (b) *erythropus* E. Geoffroy, 1803, emendation under the plenary powers under (1) (b) above of *erythropus* E. Geoffroy, 1803, as published in the combination *Sciurus erythropus*;
- (3) place on the Official Index of Rejected and Invalid Specific Names in Zoology the following names:
 - (a) *erythropus* E. Geoffroy, 1803, as published in the combination *Sciurus erythropus*, incorrect original spelling of *erythropus* E. Geoffroy, 1803, emended under the plenary powers under (1) (b) above;
 - (b) *ebii* Pel, 1851, as published in the combination *Sciurus ebii*, a name suppressed under the plenary powers under (1) (a) above.

COMMENT ON THE PROPOSAL TO VALIDATE THE EMENDATION TO
LIPHISTIUS OF *LIPISTIUS* SCHIÖDTE, 1849. Z.N.(S.) 1828
(see volume 24, page 359)

By Beatrice R. Vogel (Carnegie Museum, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, U.S.A.)

I have read the application by H. W. Levi to validate the emendation to *Liphistius* of the generic name *Lipistius* Schiödte, 1849.

It is a shame that Dr. Levi felt it necessary to make such an application, since there was no confusion about the animals involved, no matter what they were called. This seems to be a case of "The Law of Priority" vs. "Stability of Nomenclature". I have not been able to examine the original publications concerning this name, chances are they do not discuss their reasons. Without knowing the reasons for the emendation, I cannot condone it. It sounds like the all too familiar case of a "more learned scientist" correcting an "improper" usage. In this case it sounds like imposing a germanic spelling on a good word.

If Dr. Levi had not applied for a ruling, we could have continued to use both words without confusion, one as "vulgar" and one as "correct". I urge the Commission to either reject the application, or to rule that *Lipistius* be the correct name. Both names have been used, and in this case the Law of Priority should dominate.

